
**EXTERNAL SECURITY SYSTEM FOR THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT
BOLLARD DESIGN**

Washington Monument Grounds
Between 14th and 17th Streets and Constitution and Independence Avenues
Washington, DC

Report to the National Park Service

July 3, 2001

Abstract

The National Park Service has requested conceptual approval of an external security system for the Washington Monument. The proposed system consists of a circle of 370 bollards constructed on a continuous footer at approximately 185' from the corners of the monument.

Authority

DC Code, sec 5-432, and Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act of 1952, as amended (40 U.S.C. 71d).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

- **Disapproves** the proposed concept plan of the external security system for the Washington Monument as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.42(38.00)40928, in that:
 - The design is inappropriate in the relationship of the bollards to the lawn and associated natural setting – bollards are typically located in relation to walkways and streets.
 - The proposal for the ring of 370 bollards to follow the existing topography results in an undulating movement that is inappropriate in its relation to the Monument and in the context of the Mall.
 - The design of the bollards (profile and color) will result in highlighting their presence.
 - The concept plan is inconsistent with the approved Subarea Plan (1989) and Development Concepts (1993) for the Washington Monument Grounds.

- In the alternative, the Commission recommends that the National Park Service consult with the staff of the National Capital Planning Commission, Commission of Fine Arts, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and others, as appropriate, to amend the approved Subarea Plan and Development Concepts for the Washington Monument Grounds, to incorporate appropriate security design features. Such features may include:
 - Incorporation of security in the design of both streetscape and landscape elements at the perimeter of the Monument grounds.
 - Development of a second ring walkway at an appropriate width and distance from which to view the Monument that, if necessary, also accommodates adequate security standoff requirements and incorporates security measures.
 - The integration of other security design elements such as ha ha's, plinth, terracing, and seat walls within the natural landscape design of the Monument grounds.
- The Commission encourages the design of a long-term design solution that, in conjunction with implementation of the Sector Plan and Development Concepts for the Washington Monument Grounds, has the potential to enhance the National Mall.

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BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Background

The National Park Service (NPS) commissioned a study to determine what terrorist actions might be directed at monuments and memorials located in the Monumental Core of Washington, D.C. Once identified, the NPS could develop and implement specific security measures to reduce risk to both visitors and buildings.

The study determined that the Washington Monument was the building with the highest risk of attack. The two modes of attack considered most likely were a small bomb, carried by an individual into the Monument and a vehicle containing a bomb approaching the Monument. The NPS instituted a security search checkpoint staffed by U.S. Park Police. Visitors now pass through a magnetometer and are subject to search. A circle of Jersey barriers has also been installed around the Monument as a temporary measure against a vehicle-laden bomb attack.

The study identified what size vehicle bomb might be expected and, based on a blast analysis of the Monument, described what type of damage would likely occur based on how close the vehicle was to the structure. NPS then identified security measures to stop the vehicle at the required distance from the Monument, including: bollards, retaining walls, and re-grading.

Bollard Design

NPS proposes to ring the Monument with a circle of 370 bollards constructed on a continuous footer at approximately 185' from the corners. The bollards would be located approximately 50" apart. The bollard height was set as low as possible to keep visual intrusion to a minimum. A height of 39" is proposed. Different widths were investigated with a final width of 14" in diameter selected to provide the "best" scale in relation to the Monument and the surrounding area. The proposed bollard is a simple, unadorned cylinder with a 4" cap designed to discourage use as a seat. The proposed bollard is metal to be painted a neutral color.

CONSULTATION

NPS staff met informally with NCPC staff to discuss this proposal. At this meeting the proposal was identified as an interim solution pending either the elimination of the need to protect against this vehicular threat or the funding to implement the approved Subarea Plan and Development Concepts for the Washington Monument Grounds at which time, if the threat still exists, appropriate security measures would be integrated within the other elements of the plan.

EVALUATION

Staff recommends disapproval of the proposed concept plan for a security system for the Washington Monument.

Staff's recommendation is based on the following:

In general:

- Staff would prefer a permanent rather than interim solution.
- The Washington Monument grounds are bounded by 14th and 17th Streets and Constitution and Independence Avenues. Security is felt to be more appropriately dealt with at these locations. While the introduction of a ring of bollards may provide adequate security for the protection of the Monument itself, this will result in very limited protection for the majority of visitors to the Monument grounds; whereas, the provision of security at the perimeter of these grounds would provide protection for the majority of visitors in this area.
- NCPC's Interagency Security Task Force is currently in the process of identifying and designing security measures appropriate to monuments and memorials and the Mall. The Task Force has initially recommended that, to the extent possible, the design of security elements in this context should be integrated within the landscape and streetscape elements appropriate to these public spaces.
- The use of grading, terracing and the incorporation of other landscape elements is also viewed as more consistent with the design of the McMillan Plan – as applied to the Washington Monument Grounds and the Mall.

More specifically as regards the proposed Concept Plan:

- The proposed design of the ring of bollards in the greensward of the center of the Mall is viewed as intrusive in the relationship of the bollards to the lawn and associated natural setting – bollards are typically located and designed in relation to walkways and streets.
- The proposed design of the bollards results in a profile (massing) and color (light) that will highlight their presence.
- The ring of 370 bollards is proposed to follow the existing topography, thus resulting in an undulating movement that is both uncomfortable in its relation to the Monument and inappropriate within the context of the Mall.

Additionally:

- The proposal is inconsistent with the approved Subarea Plan for the Washington Monument Grounds, which calls for re-grading (including the incorporation of a seat wall in the walkway around the Monument), realigning and reconfiguring streets and walkways, adding an underground visitor center, and other site improvements. The plan does not call for incorporating a ring of freestanding bollards.
- The design and construction of security measures should be integral to the overall design and implementation of the approved Subarea Plan and Development Concepts.

Staff feels that the incorporation of ha-has, plinth and/or seat walls would be more in keeping and less intrusive than the introduction of the bollards, as proposed; however, staff also feels that the opportunity exists to amend the plan to include a second walkway ringing the Monument at an appropriate distance for enhancing pedestrian circulation in this area, viewing the Monument, and achieving the required security standoff distance. In this regard, an expansion of the re-grading of the Monument grounds as contained in the Sector Plan would also be required to provide a more symmetrical slope from the Monument to the new walkway and a more continuous elevation for the construction of the ring walkway and associated security elements.

In addition, in that the proposed solution may be argued as preferable to the current installation of Jersey barriers surrounding the Monument, staff offers the following observations:

- Interim or “temporary” installations tend to remain in place far longer than anticipated.
- The significant cost of the implementation of this proposal is contradictory to its consideration as an interim measure.

Although staff concurs that the proposed external security system for the Washington Monument is preferable to the current installation of Jersey barriers, staff recommends that the funds required to implement this proposal would be better applied to a permanent security solution designed and implemented as an integral component of an amended Sector Plan and Development Concepts for the Washington Monument Grounds.

COORDINATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed this item at its meeting on June 6, 2001, and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies participating. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the Fire Department; the Department of Housing and Community Development; the Department of Public Works; the General Services Administration; the National Park Service; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Commission of Fine Arts

At its meeting on June 21, 2001, the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) disapproved the NPS's proposed concept for an external security system for the Washington Monument as inappropriate to the National Mall. CFA indicated that its preference was to remove the jersey barriers and have nothing rather than to implement the proposed ring of bollards. CFA further stated that, as bad as the jersey barriers are, the proposed concept is equally bad. CFA stated that, if a security barrier is felt to be absolutely necessary, the preferable solution would be post and chain at the perimeter of the Monument grounds.

CONFORMANCE

National Historic Preservation Act

NPS has invited the D.C. State Historic Preservation Office to consult with it on perimeter security at the Washington Monument.

The Washington Monument was listed in the National Register of Historic Places when the Register was first established in 1966. The monument grounds are an element of the L'Enfant Plan. Designed by Robert Mills and constructed between 1848 and 1888, the obelisk was completed without the elliptical colonnade originally envisioned for its base. A generation later, the McMillan Plan envisioned centering the monument within its setting at the crossing of the two axes of the Mall by embellishing the grounds with an elaborate Beaux Arts-style landscape plan of plantings, terraces and water pools. This plan was not realized. Although there are ancillary buildings and some trees and plantings at the periphery, the monument's setting since its completion has been the vast sloping greensward at the center of the monumental core.

National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Commission's current environmental policy procedures, NCPC staff has determined that the proposed concept plan does not require an environmental analysis at this time. In accordance with the NPS Environmental Compliance Field Guide (NPS-12), NPS will achieve an environmental evaluation and review of the proposed action during development of the preliminary

design plans for the project, and will be required by NCPC submission requirements to provide NEPA compliance when the preliminary submission is accomplished.

Federal Capital Improvements Program

This project is not included in the Federal Capital Improvements Program, Fiscal Years 2001 – 2005, adopted by the Commission at its meeting on August 3, 2000.

Comprehensive Plan

The proposed security improvements would replace the existing temporary ring of Jersey barriers with a circle of new security bollards to protect the Monument. As the Washington Monument is part of the overall Mall Complex, applicable policies in the Parks, Open Space and Natural Features Element and in the Historic Features Element of NCPC's Comprehensive Plan apply:

- The great cross-axes of the Mall Complex, from the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial and from the White House to the Jefferson Memorial, are a unique national space—they are a summary of democratic ideals and achievements that must be protected from inappropriate development. The Mall should be considered complete, and any improvements necessary in this area should be limited in scope and sensitively designed to reinforce the integrity of the Mall Complex.
- New construction on Historic Landmarks or in Historic Districts should be compatible with the historic architectural character and cultural heritage of the landmark or district.

The proposed improvements should also be integrated into the approved Sector Plan for the Washington Monument Grounds, which provides in part for re-grading portions of the grounds for greater visual symmetry. Security measures would be significantly less intrusive if incorporated within this re-grading and integrated with the other proposed landscape improvements in this area.